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AUTHOR	Davis, Nadine M.
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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to increase second-grade teachers' expertise and knowledge in integration of literature themes with writing and oral presentations. The problem addressed was that many students did not receive adequate support and opportunities to interconnect reading and original writing. There was nothing in the language arts series, nor in the mandated curriculum, to encourage or to teach the strategies required to meet with success in the area of quality written and spoken communication. Student proficiency in extending literature into writing and speaking by thinking and reasoning critically is important for two reasons: (1) the demonstration of self-management and decision making skills; and (2) the reinforcement of the concept that real life problem solving techniques have more than one step in the process. The program developed included a class of 24 students and 4 teachers in all phases of the implementation. Five basic areas covered by the language arts curriculum included speaking, grammar, comprehension, spelling, and composition. The strategies provided include opportunities for writing on topics of students' selections, timed provisions for student-selected themes, time allowances for oral presentations, and integration of self-evaluation. Analysis of data revealed that the teachers enthusiastically and successfully integrated literature with the curriculum. It was concluded that, when provided with a written curriculum, both teachers and students learned how to work in tandem to interrelate literature and themes with the mandated curriculum. (A teacher's survey, parent letter, checklists for implementation, and weekly checklist are appended; contains 31 references.) (Author/CR)

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ED 396 304

Increasing Second-Grade Teachers' Expertise in Supporting Children's Growth as Writers through Interrelating Writing and Literature Themes

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

Nova Southeastern University

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Mary Ellen Van Pelt

Mary Ellen Van Pelt

Principal

Title

1500 S.W. 5th Avenue, Plantation, Florida 33317

Address

July 24, 1995

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Nadine M. Davis under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Sept. 16, 1995

Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm W. Anderson

Dr. William M. Anderson, Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Second-Grade Teachers' Expertise in Supporting Children's Growth as Writers through Interrelating Writing and Literature Themes. Davis, Nadine, 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Whole Language/Thematic Units/ Creative Writing/Literature Circles/Integrated Curriculum

This practicum was designed to increase second-grade teachers' expertise and knowledge in integration of literature themes with writing and oral presentations. Formal and informal surveys of second-grade teachers confirmed that the problem existed within the grade level.

The writer developed a program that included a class of 24 students and four teachers in all phases of the implementation. The strategies included weekly opportunities for writing on topics of students' own selections, timed provisions for weekly student-selected themes, weekly time allowances for oral presentations, and integration of self-evaluation on a weekly basis.

Analysis of the data revealed that second-grade teachers enthusiastically and successfully integrated literature with the curriculum. It was concluded that when provided with a written curriculum, both teachers and students learned how to work in tandem to interrelate literature and themes with the mandated curriculum.

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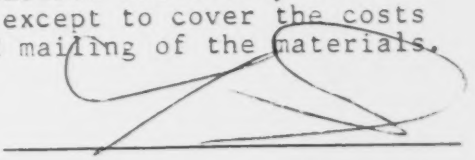

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community in which the work setting is located is an upper middle class area in the southeastern United States. The neighborhood surrounding the work setting is comprised of custom designed single family homes inhabited by families who, with some exceptions, remain in the area for years. Therefore, most of the children of the homeowners begin and end their elementary school experiences in the writer's work setting.

The work setting is situated in a city with a population of approximately 60,000 residents. There are various enriching activities available to the residents and their children. These include structured sports activities, classes in crafts, music, and fitness, and all public library resources. A great number of residents with children of elementary school age actively participate in the activities, thus exposing the students who attend the work setting to a variety of outside experiences.

The work setting is a 23-year-old elementary school. There are approximately 783 students, with a breakdown of 628 White, 84 Black, 61 Hispanic, and 10 Asian. There are six portable classrooms and 24 quasi-open classrooms within

the physical structure. There are 36 teachers, five aids, two administrators, and 18 support personnel.

The work setting was originally designed as an open school. Until the 1989-90 school year, the school had no walls. Now there are a few half-walls that serve mainly as visual barriers, not noise mufflers. Renovation is tentatively scheduled.

The work setting provides many programs designed to fit the needs of individual students. These include part-time speech and hearing, part-time gifted, resourced varying exceptionalities, dropout prevention, and part-time computers. Additionally, the school conducts a social science fair, mathematics competition, self-concept groups, drugs, aids, and weapons awareness programs.

The staff at the work setting is continuously involved in professional courses, including computers, story telling, child abuse, classroom management, and subject and content classes, many staff members attend inservice classes offering first aid, sensitivity training and computers.

The work setting has an active parent group. Over 5,000 volunteer hours were spent by parents in the clinic, classroom, playground, media center, and fund raising. The fund raisers provided money for computer work stations, playground and fitness area, trophies for various activities, information newsletters, and teacher contingency funds. Parent involvement is dedicated to and supportive of the

Parent Teacher Association, the School Advisory Council, and the School Improvement Team.

Parents and teachers work together for continuous improvement. The good of each student is always the goal. This partially explains the success found in the work setting in such areas as assertive discipline, cultural arts activities, physical fitness programs, fieldtrips, academic competitions, scores on standardized tests, and a student-run school store. Additionally, both teachers and administrators maintain an open door policy, which encourages communication and cooperations with parents and other community members.

The writer is a second-grade classroom teacher, having previously taught fifth grade at the work setting. Other professional assignments included grade chair, career education chair, science fair committee member, inservice facilitator, peer tutor, and committee chair for the evaluation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

During the implementation period the writer's class was made up of 24 third and second-grade students from multiethnic backgrounds. There were 10 second-grade students and 14 third-grade students who comprised the writer's multiage class. The writer regularly modified the curriculum for any students requiring modifications in order to meet with success. The classroom was utilized in a self-contained manner, which enabled the

writer to be exclusively responsible for all academic areas, subsequent grades, discipline procedures, and parent contacts.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The language arts series used in the work setting, and approved by the school board, was a superior one, which stressed phonics, grammar, comprehension, and handwriting. Students were furnished with basal reading texts, English texts, and corresponding workbooks. The language arts series presented basic mechanics and usage with very little review of the previous content, and yet the assignments got progressively more difficult.

The problem was that many second-grade students did not receive adequate support and opportunities to interconnect reading with writing. Specifically, the situation in the work setting did not provide the opportunities for second-grade students to acquire enough meaning from literature to enable effective interlacing with writing, listening, and oral communicating. There was nothing in the language arts series, nor in the mandated curriculum, to encourage or to teach the strategies required to meet with success in the area of quality written and spoken communication. When written assignments were presented, there was very little relation to prior knowledge or to any main theme. For

example, some second-grade students did not have the background, frame of reference, or vocabulary skills to understand exactly what was expected of the assignment. Second-grade students who cannot read efficiently were especially impacted in the area of written and spoken communication. Consequently, many second-grade students did not demonstrate mastery of the aggregate process and transition of using literature as a springboard to effective written and spoken communication.

Second-grade students generally should be able to interrelate a literature theme with grade-appropriate grammar to write and share a story that is fluent, responsive, and comprehensive. The discrepancy appeared to surface between the time students were presented with a literature theme and the apparent inefficiency in relating the theme to writing and speaking. It appeared that many second-grade students either withdrew from the assignments or wrote fragmented thoughts just to be finished.

The importance of second-grade students demonstrating proficiency in extending literature into writing and speaking by thinking and reasoning critically could not be minimized. First, when students write responsively to literature they are demonstrating self-management and decision-making skills. Second, when able to communicate a literature theme effectively to a successful and meaningful outcome, it reinforces the concept that real-

life problem-solving techniques have more than one step in the process. Finally, students who can transfer and interpret literature themes in writing and speaking modes will not fear other challenges that may be presented in real life; a transference of application and skill building. The persons affected by a lack of competence in basic communication skills included the teachers, parents and students, with the latter most impacted. As students mature and become functioning members of society, any lack of literacy skills will ultimately affect the self confidence and sociability of the student. The ability to read, reason, interpret, show continuity, classify, and distinguish relationships carries over into real-life on a daily basis directly from successful classroom experiences with literature responsiveness.

The problem was not being solved because of several factors. One, many teachers did not teach literature theme units or cross-curriculum writing. Instead, language arts was taught in an abstract manner in isolation from other subjects. Second, many teachers did not address the content of writing. Skills were stressed, which were too vague and theoretical for second-grade students to interconnect to reading, writing, and speaking activities. Finally, the problem was not being solved because it was not addressed in a systematic or organized manner.

The conclusion was that many second-grade students were not interrelating reading, writing, and speaking. Second-grade students could not relate to literature themes, and subsequently did not integrate language-arts skills with content-related cross-curricular writing and speaking activities.

Problem Documentation

The evidence was readily available documenting that the problem exists. Writer observation, combined with discussions with other second-grade teachers, confirm that second-grade students demonstrated unsatisfactory integration of literature themes with writing and speaking. When presented with isolated words relating to a theme, second-grade students were unable to create an original story. Writer observation over the past several years verify that second-grade students used either avoidance techniques or wrote down anything in order to finish the assignment. One possible reason for student avoidance might have been all four of the second-grade teachers in the writer's work setting reported that there were no weekly provisions for students to write on topics of their own choosing. Another possibility was that, according to the second-grade teachers, less than 20 minutes per week was devoted to theme or focus-area topics of the students' choice. Finally, all second-grade

teachers confirmed that no opportunities were furnished for students to orally share their writings (see Appendix C).

It was observed by the writer that many second-grade students, when provided with themes, appeared distracted, confused, and frequently asked questions about the expectations of the assignments. Most resulting stories were fragmented and grammatically incorrect. A possible reason for confusion was the lack of emphasis second-grade teachers placed on theme writing combined with the insufficiency of purposeful writing activities utilized within the classroom. Specifically, second-grade teachers did not encourage, instruct, nor require students to independently write a letter about a book to a friend or a reaction to an author.

The writer's work setting was textbook oriented, and, as such, encouraged all instructional personnel to coordinate textbooks with corresponding workbooks. It was expected that once a textbook has been completed, the companion workbook would be completed also. Given this unofficial mandate, it was possible to conclude that the teachers in the writer's work setting did not promote creative theme writing and did not have specific support strategies promoting integration of relevant materials. It was too easy to instruct students in the same methods as had always been utilized. Additionally, the second-

grade teachers generally did not have a frame of reference for integrating themes.

A survey (see Appendix A) of second-grade teachers substantiated the assertion that many second-grade students could not relate writing and speaking to literature. Second-grade teachers in the worksetting expressed frustration at both their inability to present literature-based writing as well as the students' inexperience at integrating relevant stories. Most second-grade teachers felt that using literature as a springboard to expressive writing and speaking requires strategies and materials that did not exist in the workplace. The general consensus was that proper presentation of literature-based procedures would enhance students' awareness and expertise.

Second-grade teachers in the work setting validated unanimously that literature integration should be taught from kindergarten on. Critical-thinking skills and positive attitudes towards literature/integration were not observed at the second-grade level. All second-grade teachers responded in the affirmative that if a program was designed to integrate literature with writing and speaking, it would be incorporated regularly.

Verification that many second-grade students were consistently experiencing difficulty in literature-based writing existed in several forms. Justification that the

problem deserved attention was that many second-grade students demonstrated less proficiency in writing a narrative story than in actually applying grammatical skills in writing. According to school district records, students in grade four were unable to focus on content matter in short theme-style essays. When presented with multiple-choice questions, fourth-grade students tended to demonstrate improvement on questions measuring the same content as the essay assignment. To further validate that the problem was an important area, second-grade county-mandated essay test scores testified to the indisputable fact that students scored consistently lower on theme writing than on multiple-choice tests assessing the theme.

An informal discussion with second-grade teachers affirmed that of the five basic areas emphasized in second-grade language arts, theme writing created the most concern. Students were performing poorly and teachers recognized this fact. Students were not mastering the concepts of theme focus, organization, and sentence construction, and teachers were united in their concern.

The five basic areas covered by the second-grade language-arts curriculum included speaking, grammar, comprehension, spelling, and composition. When asked to rank the five areas in order of greatest need, all the second-grade teachers rated composition as the area most in need of redesign and scrutiny.

All data regarding second-grade students' unskillfulness in theme writing substantiated that the situation was a genuine problem. The status at the time of the problem was important enough to merit the scrutiny of a practicum.

Causative Analysis

The probable causes of the problem did not appear to be complicated. Many teachers presented language arts in a traditional manner. The teacher stood in front of the group, lectured, and handed out the assignment. Most second-grade students are developmentally concrete and therefore a theoretical assignment presented without reference has no meaning. Even when the assignment was introduced with examples, many second-grade students did not understand how to create a story. The abstractness was too vague for second-grade students to comprehend.

Additionally, it was reasonable to present the speculation that writing assignments presented in isolation also had little or no meaning to second-grade students. The county had no guidelines for minimum writing skills, so therefore, as long as each chapter in the adopted language-arts series was covered and tested, the students were passed on to the next section whether or not the previous chapter was understood or mastered. Since students were not required to meet any standards or

objectives, writing ideas presented in isolation, although confusing to many students, was the typical method of instruction.

Many second-grade students were passed on from first grade without ever having written an original story. The writing process, when unused, becomes an obstacle to students who have not been exposed to original writings. Writing is resisted and remains an unlearned process. Skills not learned become skills not mastered.

Additionally, 27 out of 117 second-grade students could read on grade level. It is possible that students identified as poor readers were uninterested in the writing process. Since many teachers did not address theme writing or speaking, or did not know how to teach the concepts, students who were not reading proficiently on grade level were missing out on two major means of communication.

As with any situation, there were several possibilities for the causes, but one specific cause that appeared to be consistent throughout the writer's professional career was that without exposure to literature themes, students could not relate to writing and speaking. If students do not have a springboard or a frame of reference with which to associate, it follows that there is no motivation to creatively communicate.

Second-grade students are limited naturally from many world experiences. The young age of the students actually serve as a shield from the realities of the world. Therefore, without literature exposure, students are unable to visualize or grasp the significance and importance, as well as the intrinsic pleasure, of writing and speaking original works.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

It appeared to be time for curriculum reform in the area of whole-language units in elementary school. In education, certain fundamentals cannot be compromised. Specifically, students must learn to read, write, and communicate, but, according to Carter (1991), teachers in various disciplines continue to separate subjects with the rationale that only English teachers should teach thematic units. Carter validates that students are unable to interconnect reading and writing in the upper grades. Explicitly, students were found to be unable to relate diverse disciplines to the writing process. Cronin, Sinatra, and Meadows (1990) further confirm that students are not efficiently comprehending and converting data into writing. Specifically, 23 percent of the Mississippi Gulf coast students could not adequately read, relate, or compose a clear written statement when presented with a grade-appropriate written passage.

Affirming that students are unable to connect narrative texts in writing, Cudd and Roberts (1989) disclose that primary students have difficulty with context as related to sentence structure. In particular, Cudd and Roberts found that primary students cannot organize material in order to inform.

The conclusion that students across all grade levels are having difficulty associating content and communication. There appears to be significant data in the literature to reinforce the writer's premise that many teachers are not providing the opportunities for students to make the multilevel connection from reading to writing. The review of the literature identifies and validates that the problem exists and deserves the scrutiny of a practicum.

The integration of literature, writing, and speaking is a multilevel process involving several areas of critical thinking. Students must be able to interpret what the words mean to them, transfer the comprehension to written form, and communicate orally what the words embody. The procedure includes comprehension application, analysis, and synthesis of stated materials. Most importantly, students need to be exposed to literature selections, or the process will not take place.

The second-grade students in the writer's work setting are not utilizing the stated hierarchy effectively in order to sequence the processes. The cognitive

integration is integral to effective writing and speaking, and only students who can already put thought, writing, and speaking together reciprocally find the procedure flowing, natural, and untroubled.

The research draws upon integrated resources in order to demonstrate that literature theme writing is interdisciplinary as well as international. As cited by Early (1990) students in British Columbia cannot organize knowledge into written or spoken language. Students in all grade levels are unable to express themselves in written and spoken form effectively enough to demonstrate competency. Taking learning styles and other variables into consideration, as well as allowing for learning rates, students consistently could not translate, integrate, or organize knowledge.

Drake (1991) confirmed that students who appeared to have mastered basic grade-appropriate knowledge as measured by standard tests, cannot transfer the knowledge into written or spoken form unless the subjects were broken into small, identifiable components. Drake's study, conducted in Ontario, substantiates the Early (1990) study that the problem is a global one.

Validating that students who appear to have mastered requisite curriculum knowledge but are not able to articulate the information for oral or written language is Suhor (1984), who found that high school students cannot mentally organize their thoughts. Suhor states

that when subjects are presented in isolation, high school students cannot mold the content into a cohesive and fluent form. The findings confirm the problem spans grade levels as well as geographic boundaries.

Writing and speaking effectively requires understanding the steps needed to meet with success. Davis (1990) states that junior high students' inability to write or speak on given subjects is due to a lack of exposure to life experiences combined with a deficiency in critical thinking skills. Davis finds that the combination can lead to students dropping out of school and subsequently beginning a cycle of failure.

Verifying the Davis (1990) findings, Elks' (1988) work with junior high school students demonstrates when subjects are taught in isolation, students react with little desire to learn. Of consequence, the students fall further behind the educated populace (Davis) and consider dropping out of school. Both Davis and Elks strengthen the case that the problem is evident across all grade levels.

Hernandez (1987) confirm that students are unable to take an isolated subject and find a commonality in order to write and speak with mastery on the given subject. The Hernandez assertion is that students are being deprived of the opportunity to write and speak fluently because teachers are not creating the atmosphere conducive to innovative growth.

Continued evidence that a lack of specific preparation throughout the required core curriculum, along with a lack of exposure to innovative and workable strategies, contributes significantly to a failure in writing and speaking fluently is presented by Willis (1989), who found that isolated disciplines suppressed writing and speaking organization. Willis finds that content and context isolation contribute to motivational failure in high school students.

First grade students lack a sense of ownership and responsibility which result in a lack of enthusiasm for writing and speaking on any subject (Hyde, 1990). It is suggested that part of the cause is related to a deficiency in application skills, reasons for writing and speaking, and lack of exposure to either topics or story starters. Hyde continues that the students appear suppressed when emphasis is placed on mechanics rather than content.

Staab (1991) affirmed Hyde's (1990) contention that students' lack enthusiasm for writing and speaking by disclosing that students in the second and third grades are unmotivated to write or speak on isolated exercises when activities are tightly controlled and the natural integration of subject matter is curtailed.

Affirming both Staab's (1991) and Hyde's (1990) findings are Jacobs and Borland (1986), who contend that gifted students are not eager to write or speak on topics

unless there exists the dimension of theme units. The gifted student's thoughts appear fragmented and disjointed when asked to focus on symbols or facts in writing and speaking. Jacobs and Borland find success and fluency when a multidisciplinary approach is presented.

Lauritzen (1992) reinforces Jacobs and Borland (1986) with the finding that students in second grade experienced a lack of cognitive growth in a standard classroom environment. After literature was integrated with science, the students intellectual development was enhanced.

According to Walmsley (1992), second-grade students do not enjoy literature when it is presented in a traditional manner. When exposed to coherent literature themes, second-grade students enjoyed the experience and consequently produced quality work.

Barone (1990) affirms the findings of Walmsley (1992) in that a mixed-grade, mixed-ability group was deficient in writing and speaking skills until they were provided with journals. The student enthusiasm increased when literature themes were introduced and simultaneously the journals were assigned as interpretive dialogues.

Students in the writer's work setting were not enthusiastic or fluent in writing and speaking. There was no transfer of cognitive abilities and curriculum

knowledge in writing or speaking. Emphasizing the writer's observations is Farris (1989), who finds that primary students are uninterested in writing and speaking. Farris confirms the findings of Walmsley (1992) and Barrone (1990) that journals related to literature themes provide the required link to writing and speaking. Farris' finding is consistent with the discovery of increased student enthusiasm.

According to Vogt (1991), teachers and supervisors are not providing the climate for exposing students to integrated literature themes. Writing and speaking topics presented in isolation is ineffective for students. Confirming Vogt's finding is Darvas (1985), who discloses that primary teachers do not have adequate resources to teach literature themes and of consequence, students' exposure to topic integration is nonexistent.

It is further documented by Beane (1992) that the separate-subject approach hinders students in writing and speaking efficiently. Beane finds that teachers are not shifting to integrated curriculums, and the result is single-topic rather than multi-topic integration. The confirmation is further confirmed that a cause of the problem is teacher and supervisor support of literature themes in place of separated topics and subjects. The over-emphasis on subjects rather than a central theme is preventing students from the exposure required for literacy in writing and speaking.

Strickland and Morrow (1990) contend that studying separate lessons on particular skills is too generalized and distant. The finding further confirms that of Walmsley (1992), Barone (1990), and Farris (1989) in that writing and speaking efficiently and effectively is adversely affected when students are taught lessons in isolation.

Further documentation that writing and speaking in a literate fashion is globally enigmatic exists in the Stock (1986) study of British students. The investigation turned up the results that students who had isolated and limited literature and curriculum exposure could not write or speak in an effective manner. The findings confirm Early (1990) that students on an international basis are significantly deficient in effective writing and speaking when the teachers do not provide total theme participation and exposure.

The interconnectedness of writing and speaking with literature themes spans not only countries but grade levels as well. Leopold and Jenkinson (1988) found that 79 percent of 162 elementary and secondary teachers of various subjects made few writing assignments, did not use journals, and did not incorporate literature into the curriculum. Consequently, the students could not write or speak fluently on selected topics. The Leopold and Jenkinson findings clearly substantiate the data of

Drake (1991), Early (1990), and Suhor (1984) who also determined that writing and speaking proficiency spans all grade levels.

Leopold and Jenkinson (1988) monitored a study of multigrade teachers designed to track the influence of literature themes upon writing. It was found that the students of the teachers who increased writing assignments related to literature significantly improved the focus and content of their writings. Students of all ability levels and grade levels showed the same pattern. The results present specific evidence that literature theme writing is a major issue in education regardless of student ability, developmental stage, geographic location, or grade level.

It was apparent from the research, all of which validated the writer's local data, that there was a global problem affecting students' ability to successfully write and speak on literature themes. There appeared to be internal causes as well as external influences. One internal cause was that teachers did not spend the time integrating the curriculum or encouraging writing and speaking. Another internal cause was that students, as a result of not being exposed to literature themes, were not motivated and not equipped to utilize critical thinking skills and their application strategies.

An external cause of the problem was that the resources and training were not provided to educators in presenting integrated literature themes and writing and speaking strategies effectively. Another external cause appeared to be a lack of desire on the part of educators to either design and/or implement a literature-themed program, an obvious ommission from every research situation.

Overall, the results of the analysis of the literature were consistent and unremarkable. The writer observed similar causes in the work setting, and although variables existed in all studies, the commonalities were uniform and predictable. Exposure, consistent literature integration, devergent thinking, creative interpretation, and transference were critical skills that were lacking across geographic, age, and grade situations, and apparently were the necessary strategies that may have increased the success of the specific skills of writing and speaking across the curriculum.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals, expectations, and expected outcomes were projected for the practicum. The goal is to increase the support and opportunities for second-grade students to integrate grade-appropriate interdisciplinary writing and speaking activities. The teachers will become more aware of the integration of grade-appropriate interdisciplinary activities in relation to writing and speaking. Therefore, the students will be able to interpret, analyze, write, and speak on thematic literature at the second-grade level.

Expected Outcomes

A writer-made checklist was distributed to the second-grade teachers prior to implementation (see Appendix C). The second-grade teachers unanimously reported that weekly provisions are not afforded the students for writing on their own topics. Therefore, the first expected outcome is that at the end of the practicum implementation period, four out of five second-grade teachers will be providing weekly opportunities for writing on topics of students' own choices.

The second-grade teachers confirmed that less than 20 minutes a week is devoted to students' theme areas decided upon by the students (see Appendix C). Accordingly, the second expected outcome is that four out of five second-grade teachers will provide at least 40 minutes weekly for student-selected themes.

The third expected outcome is that at the end of the practicum implementation period, four out of five second-grade teachers will be providing weekly time for second-grade students to present their writings orally, because currently, none of the second-grade teachers are affording any time to oral presentations. The fourth expected outcome is that four of five second-grade teachers will be integrating student self-evaluations of the students' choice at least once weekly. The writer will accept these as evidence of successful outcomes.

Measurement of Outcomes

The outcomes were measured by a writer-made checklist and completed by the second-grade teachers on a weekly basis (see Appendix D). The writer was concerned with the amount of time devoted to the outcomes, and not the quality or content of students' output. The pre-implementation checklist (see Appendix C) was used as a post-implementation comparison evaluation.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

The problem was that many second-grade students were not given the opportunity to interconnect reading with writing and speaking. Students were not relating the abstractness of effective communication with the strategies required for success. Attempts to teach writing and speaking in the work setting were unsuccessful. The writer had presented written and verbal communication assignments, yet students were consistently unable to meet with success. There was no transfer of knowledge to skill.

When faced with a similar problem, both Barone (1990), and Farris (1989) set aside consistent time frames each day to expose the students to literature experiences. The students in Barone's multiability classroom, as well as the primary students of Farris, integrated reading, writing, and speaking by means of journals. Lauritzen (1992) took the idea of concretness further by creating weekly sessions in a second-grade class using mathematical concepts, manipulatives, and stories as springboards for theme writing. All the programs met with success, with

Barone applying the accomplishment to eventual daily literature-themed classroom activities.

Short (1993) substantiated Barone (1990) with a science-themed curriculum in a second grade classroom. Short argued that children's inquiry was fostered through intellectual, integrated development.

Staff development for teachers, administrators, and parents was the main solution for Vogt (1991), Beane (1992), and Leopold and Jenkinson (1988). All staff members who supported change were assisted in integrated reading and language-arts theme.

Calkins (1987) supported Beane (1992) and Leopold and Jenkinson (1988) by taking staff development further. Calkins asserted that teachers could support each other through networks that sharing writings, reflecting teaching of writing, and talking over concerns.

Collaborative methods of theory-practice and research-teaching between colleges was suggested by Haste and Stevens (1985). It was apparent that even in special education classes, dysfunctional writings were helped through collaborative practices.

Further suggesting that teachers take the responsibility for providing students with theme writing time, Harwayne and Calkins (1991) called for teachers to change the way of thinking and establish class writing courses. It was suggested that students learn writing in a non-threatening manner through creating

memoirs, picture books, and notebook journals. In addition, Short (1993) confirmed that picture books offered unique opportunities for students to develop visual literacy so they could explore, reflect, and critique the images.

Short (1993) presented data that provided interactive and innovative approaches to the basal reader approach built upon the developmental theory-practice connection. Teachers and principals, in two study groups, changed the Tucson, Arizona Unified School District to a literature-based curriculum. The Short findings served to further validate that once educators integrated the curriculum, the resulting sense of community provided the springboard for positive change in literature-based curriculum.

Integrating other disciplines into the language-arts program without literature was the strategy of Strickland and Morrow (1990). The belief that students should explore, experiment, and play prior to writing and speaking was the impetus to the method.

Continuing the approach of teaching curriculum before literature were Jacobs and Borland (1986) who advocated a focus on basic knowledge and content with language disciplines being the acquisition of curriculum.

Teaching thematic units to integrate all curriculum literacy was Early (1990), who stressed total immersion in meaning, analysis, and communication before any content was stressed. Language competency apparently was

achieved at different rates, but in an organized framework of knowledge (Early). Davis (1990) broke the dropout cycle with a thematic approach that enabled students to write and speak about their emotions and feelings as related to literature.

Other solutions included process writing (Hernandez, 1987) which had no grammar, sentence structure, or spelling restrictions. Parents were involved in the program, and it came to a successful conclusion with 80 percent of the students showing improvement in theme writing.

A completely opposite solution was presented by Darvas (1985), who utilized literature theme writing emphasizing grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. The students demonstrated marked increases in written and verbal communication along with a positive attitudinal shift.

Hyde's (1990) report was a unique approach in that literature themes were not introduced until well into the study. Writing for real, human reasons in natural circumstances, the students took a stuffed bear home each day and wrote about the adventures of the bear (Hyde). The program was successful, with the students writing a book a week by the culmination of the study.

The results of Suhor (1984) were also successful, with the students communicating their thoughts orally before being introduced to theme units. It was similar

to Hyde (1990) in that other activities were addressed before literature themes were introduced. In contrast to Hyde, however, Suhor acknowledged and advocated the need for teachers to learn how to present writing and speaking units.

The London study (Stock, 1986) provided global documentation that writing and speaking on integrated curriculum themes was a success when presented in a manner meaningful to students. Stock advocated and encouraged social writing and speaking in combination with academic assignments. The contention was that people speak socially before they learn to write. It was apparent that when students were exposed to real life situations, the results were superior and successful.

Individual differences were addressed by Staab (1991), who found that small heterogenous clusters were more successful than large homogeneous groups. In addition, the classroom was filled with print and the centers color-coded. Staab found the flexibility of the curriculum, physical state of the classroom, and small group interaction contributed to quality time for the teacher to work with individuals. Of consequence, the integration of literature with writing and speaking came naturally to the student because there are no threats or pressure. Based on the premise that comradery and environment build on exposure to writing and speaking strategies, Staab proved that students mastered skills

developmentally and systematically helping one another. Staab's findings backed up those of Graves (1983), whose first grade students were successful in sharing original books.

Description of Selected Solution

Writing and speaking using literature themes was a controversial issue in that although it enhanced higher-order thinking skills as well as writing skills, content area knowledge, and oral communication proficiency, very few teachers took the time to present it in a meaningful manner. In order for students to value curriculum integration and become effective multilevel communicators, several strategies appeared to be superior. The writer felt that students needed to be active learners and to contribute to the learning process. A requisite to this was to consider the way students thought (Cudd & Roberts, 1989), and the way teachers taught (Sensenbaugh, 1989). It was important to utilize maturity levels of students and positive strategies of teachers (Beane, 1992).

The writer felt that students should be challenged to find patterns, stimulate discussions, and develop a personal repertoire of strategies (Jacobs & Borland, 1986) including appropriate vocabulary utilization, as well as reason skills analyzation in small groups.

Making connections across disciplines without going to extremes (Willis, 1989) was a viable strategy for the

writer. In order to encourage students to plug in thinking and reasoning and to relate it to real-world situations through literature, the themes needed to be organized around students' own questions and concerns (Willis).

The writer further suggested student-produced ideas generated in small groups. Cooperative learning techniques fostered and encouraged sharing of ideas and open communication. Students could naturally help each other to reason, develop higher-order skills, analyze, and explore data. Backing the Staab (1991) report was Short (1992), who also found that literature circles provided collaborative learning.

The writer was prepared to attempt any stated strategies as well as any combination of new ideas that may have arisen during implementation. The writer was flexible and eager in utilizing any innovative techniques to aid student success. The total involvement of students was critical to positive accomplishment.

The writer petitioned the local school board for permission to implement the practicum. The request was granted, and the writer's principal was designed to supervise written materials to be utilized during the implementation period. The writer then requested parental permission to include students in the execution of the practicum (see Appendix B). With all parents responding in the affirmative, final authorization now enabled the writer to proceed with the implementation phase of the practicum.

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The classroom was the writer's work setting. Materials and supplies were those that were already provided in the worksetting. The writer was responsible for all provisions and planning.

The writer applied the solution strategies two times a week for 45 minutes per session. Implementation included 24 students in a large, but informal, setting inside the writer's classroom. All 24 students were active participants at each meeting and student input was encouraged by the writer. The writer was completely responsible for each session in its entirety.

Solutions included challenging students to think critically about literature selections, stimulating discussions to include multidisciplinary ideas, developing a flexible repertoire of strategies, utilizing cooperative learning groups, and technology-assisted activities.

The writer was prepared to attempt most of the previous suggestions, as well as to incorporate any new ideas that may arise. Unexpected events that originated were addressed on an individual incident basis, and pre-planned activities were followed as closely as possible.

Report of Action Taken

Month One

Week One: The writer utilized brainstorming in order to encourage the students to provide input. After much discussion, the students opted on an oceanography theme for the month. The students were provided with a literature list and books were shared daily by the students. The content of the books provided the springboard for a whole-language approach as well as new vocabulary exposure. The students wrote at their own pace on any topic related to the ocean and most students shared the original writings with the groups.

Week Two: The students brought in seashells, starfish, and other oceanography-related items. One student created his own ocean in a two-liter bottle after a class experiment peaked his interest. The students shared their ideas for writing topics and decided to use cooperative learning to write their stories for the week. Specifically, it was decided that groups of three students would write on a topic. Each student assigned himself to write either "who and what," "when and where," or "how and why." Many students opted to share their stories orally and to critique his or her own story in relation to content, not grammar.

Week Three: The writer brought in a life-size ski boat that occupied a conspicious place in the classroom.

The boat served as the impetus for the students to write about such diverse topics as shipwrecks, deep-sea diving, and other nautically-related topics. Some students even drew pictures to correlate with their stories. The students who shared their stories did so sitting in the boat.

Week Four: After brainstorming, the students decided to build an aquarium using general household items. The exhibit was prominently displayed and writing topics revolved around the vocabulary the students had been learning as related to the class aquarium. One student wrote a story from the perspective of a fish. To culminate the unit, the class, in conjunction with another class, adopted a whale from the "Save the Whales Foundation."

Month Two

Week One: The oceanography unit continued into the second month, and deviations from the original plan naturally occurred. Specifically, a closed-circuit television program premiered entitled <u>You Can Write Anything</u>, which served as a springboard for the students to utilize creative and original topics. The weekly program became a regular feature of four out of five second-grade teachers, who were glad and grateful to have the additional input.

Week Two: The students brainstormed a list of people and places related to the oceanography theme. They utilized magazines and cut out applicable pictures about which they wrote and shared original stories. The students enjoyed creating their own topics from pictures, which they attached to their stories. The other second-grade teachers were provided with the magazine strategy to apply to their own themes.

Week Three: The students created original connect-the-dots game. The numbers corresponded to the multiplication tables and graphs and charts were constructed on the students' favorite sea animals. The students additionally had a writing contest to ascertain which story related the best to the tables, graphs, and charts. The students enjoyed associating math to creative topics. One student actually wrote about the multiplication tables on an animated fashion, giving each table a sea-animal name.

Week Four: The students created a web, or word bank, of ocean-related terms. They generated their own open-ended sentences which resulted in a class-produced book. The book was displayed on a bulletin board along with the books from some of the other second-grade teachers.

Month Three

Week One: The thematic unit was on Dinosaurs. The students brainstormed prehistoric terms, which were listed on a chart by the students who contributed the vocabulary. In round-robin style, the students generated an oral story, which was transferred to a separate chart. Two other second-grade classes were invited to hear the stories, and the visiting students also contributed to the original story. The students drew pictures with captions to illustrate the cooperative-style story.

Week Two: A volunteer parent read a dinosaur story to the students. The students then wrote and shared imaginative and creative varied endings to the story. Fossils were constructed using clay, cotton balls, and seashells to demonstrate how paleontologists and archeologists learn about prehistoric creatures. The students worked in cooperative groups and enjoyed their journey into the past.

Week Three: The writer listed the names of several dinosaurs which the students copied onto index cards. The students drew pictures of each dinosaur on the index cards and generated a dinosaur board game in groups of six. The individual groups wrote their own rules for their original games. The games were shared and enjoyed by all students.

Week Four: Working in groups of four, the students wrote descriptions of what dinosaurs looked like, what they ate, and any other facts they could ascertain. A dinosaur shape book was constructed using the data generated by the cooperative groups. The book was shared with the other second-grade students.

Month Four

Week One: The theme was Frogs and Toads, and was presented simultaneously with two other second-grade teachers. Although the two other second-grade teachers taught the lessons within their own classrooms, the basic design of the theme was adhered to as much as possible. Key vocabulary words were presented to the students on a chart. The students identified perfixes, suffixes, and compound words. The vocabulary was utilized in original sentences and questions, which the students shared orally.

Week Two: Using the vocabulary word list from the previous week, the students identified opposites, synonyms, and antonyms by constructing individual miniature bulletin boards on construction paper. Habitats of frogs and toads were drawn by the students along with life-cycle illustrations. The entire project was shared with the other second-grade students.

Week Three: A compass was utilized, along with a student-constructed frog and toad map. The students

worked in cooperative learning groups to include legends, directionality, and paper-plate frog and toad cutouts on their maps. A written narrative was included with each map.

Week Four: The students invented a math hopping game. Body parts of frogs and toads made from construction paper were used as game pieces. The students continued in the cooperative learning groups to write the rules of the games they invented. The students traded games and played each others' games by reading the student-generated rules.

Month Five

Week One: The theme concept was abandoned at this time in order to encourage students to practice creative control. Three different versions of the fairy tale Cinderella was read in round-robin fashion by the students. The three countries that produced the selected versions were used to classify the various vocabulary words. The students orally compared and contrasted the stories using the following elements: (a) good over evil, (b) rewards of good characters, (c) punishment of bad characters, (d) pain preceeding happiness, (e) royalty, and (f) magic objects. The input was recorded by the contributing students on a chart, and students subsequently wrote their own renditions of Cinderella.

The stories were shared and the vocabulary words were checked off when used.

Week Two: The students brought in original drawings of their backyards. The students traded pictures and wrote what they would do to either improve or change the backyard. The students shared their ideas orally, which greatly amused the students whose backyards were addressed.

Week Three: After brainstorming ideas for writing adventures, the students decided to write individual descriptions of common objects. For example, one student chose to describe a ball without naming the object. The students traded papers and tried to identify the items that had been described by their classmates. The students then drew pictures of what they thought the entry was. The students shared their work orally.

Week Four: The students decided to write their own bedtime stories without any endings. In cooperative groups, the students traded papers and created their own culminations to the other students' stories. The students then shared their stories orally, simultaneously using sensory words to describe how they felt as they heard the stories.

Month Six

Week One: Deviating again from the theme approach, the students decided through brainstorming to write down a problem they had. After breaking into small groups, papers were traded and students attempted to write solutions to other students' problems. The finished projects were shared orally. It was agreed by the students that many of them experienced similar problems and concerns, and that they were comforted to learn that their feelings were not unique.

Week Two: The students brainstormed and decided to write about and draw an original invention. After individually executing the project, students traded papers and named each others' inventions. The finished products were shared orally.

Week Three: As a spinoff on a health lesson, the students suggested that they describe each other and attempt to guess who the description fits. This was accomplished by individual work and shared orally. The students enjoyed hearing how their classmates envisioned them. The students agreed that they did not perceive themselves as their classmates did.

Week Four: After studying and discussing the Underground Railroad, the students constructed a train out of construction paper and on each car of the train, they wrote the who, what, when, where, and how

respectively. The students then systematically invited the other second-grade students to the classroom, read their stories, and shared their trains. The writer's students were careful to point out that the trains were but a graphic and concrete depiction of the Underground Railroad, which was not a real train. The writer's students then helped the other second-grade students construct their own trains.

Month Seven

Week One: Poetry was the selection of the writer's second-grade students. They brought in poetry to share, and the steps in writing poetry were reviewed. Specifically, the writer pointed out that poems do not have to rhyme, that poems are not indented, and that poems begin with a capital letter at the beginning of each line. The students decided to create a shape poem and cooperatively listed descriptive words and phrases about any subject of their choice. They drew the outline of the shape and wrote original poems around the shapes. The second-grade students shared their poems with each other.

Week Two: The students decided to create an alphabet poem. They each selected a word and listed as many adjectives that described that word. The students used dictionaries and thesauri to find the descriptors.

The selected word was written vertically, each letter of the word was matched with an adjective that began with that letter, and each poem was illustrated. The students traded poems and read each others' poems orally.

Week Three: The students opted to select individual topics on which to write a poem. One student rewrote a nursery rhyme, while another student described himself in verse. The students illustrated their poems and shared them orally.

Week Four: Couplets, Cinquains, and Haikus were selected by the students. Individually they wrote verses, edited them in cooperative groups, and shared them with each other orally. The students then created a book of their eclectic mixture and displayed it on the bulletin board.

Month Eight

Week One: Journal writing was the choice of the students. The students decided to keep a journal of their daily activities in narrative, not list, form. Using construction paper and writing paper, the students created their own booklets in which to write their thoughts. The first entries related to the actual construction of the journals.

Week Two: At a loss for original journal entries, some students expressed frustration for daily writing.

Other students generated ideas in order to help their classmates. Specifically, a few of the ideas generated by the helping students included complaints, dreams, wishes, and favorite places. The suggested ideas served as a springboard for the students, and journal writing once again commenced and was shared orally.

Week Three: The students decided to branch out in their journal writing. Through brainstorming, it was decided that journal entries could now include the practical as well as the imaginative, the fanciful, and the thoughtful. One student wrote about things she would like to change in her life. This generated a discussion about events in the lives of the students and how those events affected them and their families. The discussion was enlightening and stimulating.

Week Four: The final session of the implementation included several aspects. Specifically, the writer and the students reviewed the past eight months and wrote their thoughts on the many events that had transpired. The writer met with the other second-grade teachers and assessed the implementation and subsequent progress.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem addressed in the practicum was that many second-grade students did not receive adequate support and opportunities to interconnect reading and original writings. The second-grade teachers were not providing the students with time to develop topics, write on the topics, or share the topics. Additionally, the second-grade teachers were not integrating student self-evaluations of their choices.

The solution strategy utilized by the writer involved exposing the students to opportunities for creating, writing, sharing, and self-evaluating their own topics related to themes or to original ideas. Specifically, some strategies included, but were not limited to, brainstorming, listing, utilizing dictionaries and thesauri, and cooperative learning groups. The other second-grade teachers were actively involved, as were their students. The most popular project was journal writing, where students and teachers generated and shared intimate concerns and feelings.

Results

A writer-made checklist was administered to the second-grade teachers on a weekly basis (see Appendix D). The first expected outcome was that at the end of the implementation period, four out of five second-grade teachers would be providing weekly opportunities for writing on topics of students' own choices. The result was that four out of five second-grade teachers were providing the weekly opportunities.

The second expected outcome was that four of five second-grade teachers will provide at least 40 minutes weekly for student-selected themes. The result was that four out of five second-grade teachers provided more than 40 minutes weekly for student-selected themes.

The third expected outcome was that at the end of the implementation period, four out of five second-grade teachers would provide weekly time for students to present their writings orally. At the end of the implementation period, four out of five second-grade teachers were providing weekly time for oral presentations.

The fourth expected outcome was that four out of five second-grade teachers would integrate student self-evaluations of the students' choice at least once weekly. At the end of the implementation period, four out of

five second-grade teachers were integrating student self-evaluations at least once weekly.

The writer maintained a journal to document unexpected events. Any unusual or unforseen incidents were chronicled on an incident by incident basis. The journal entries provided the documentation for unprojected results.

Discussion

The practicum was designed to increase second-grade teachers expertise through interrelating writing and literature themes. The evaluation data indicated that the writer's outcomes were all met or surpassed because four out of five second-grade teachers indicated that they provided weekly opportunities for writing on their own topics, provided 40 or more minutes weekly for student-selected themes, allowed weekly opportunities for oral presentations, and integrated student self-evaluations on a weekly basis.

An analysis of the data specified that three out of five second-grade teachers provided more than weekly opportunities for students to write on their own topics as well as allowed more than 40 minutes a week for student selected themes. The implication was that both the teachers and the students found the process enjoyable and successful enough to go beyond the expectations. Upon further data breakdown, it was disclosed that one

second-grade teacher had just had a new baby and was finding it difficult to adhere to the writer's suggestions. The other second-grade teacher was in her first year in second grade and was in a transition and adjustment period, thus avoiding most of the writer's suggestions. The writer interpreted the behaviors of the two teachers as consistent with the findings of Hernandez (1987), who asserted that teachers were not committed to giving time to writing opportunities.

The writer's contention that exposure to literature required comprehension, application, analysis and synthesis of material was explicitly reinforced (Davis, 1990) when second-grade teachers exposed the students to real-life subjects which were translated into individual and group topic writing. Successful combining and relating of subjects were verified by both Davis and Elks' (1988) contentions that writing effectively requires exposure to a multimodel curriculum. Student involvement with activities, along with student input proved highly successful in demonstrating the effectiveness of teacher involvement and encouragement was confirmed by the findings of Staab (1991).

Lauritzen (1992) and Jacobs and Borland (1986) proved that integrating resources was interdisciplinary in nature. The second-grade teachers who provided integrated subjects and time for the students to create their own topics related to the curriculum were

themselves reinforced in the concept of student-selected subjects. The more the second-grade students demonstrated enthusiasm and fluency, the more the teachers felt that the program was successful.

The implications were obvious and unremarkable. The second-grade students, provided with the time and freedom to write and share topics of their choice, were receptive and eager to continue their accomplishments. Subsequently, the second-grade teachers were reinforced in the concept that integrating literature, curriculum content, and real-life situations consistently produced a transfer of cognitive abilities that bridged into effective and efficient writing.

The writer found the journal invaluable. The journal contained notes on the implementation and became a vital element as both a planning tool and a vehicle of closure for the report. The journal records indicated a multitude of deviations from the practicum proposal. Specifically, some of the unanticipated circumstances included the writer's assignment to a multiage class, the diversions from the original calendar plan in order to accommodate students' requests and needs, and the inclusion of poetry as a means of written communication. The uniqueness of the variations from the practicum proposal combined with the writer's planned activities to produce a windfall of teacher and student success.

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Recommendations

The writer recommends including students in the learning process because students who are stakeholders in the change process, planning methodologies, discussion activities, and evaluative procedures learn effectively and retain efficiently. Additionally, the writer recommends maintaining a relaxed and open atmosphere in order to initiate activities because students can participate in and contribute to the learning process successfully if they are at ease and their input is acknowledged.

The writer further recommends that teachers consistently and uniformly provide time for students to identify and write on topics of their own choosing. Teachers need to set aside quality, non-threatening time for students to create, share, and self-evaluate. It is not necessary to replicate the writer's activities in order to meet with success, but it is recommended that similar procedures be implemented in order to achieve results analogous to those stated in the writer's report.

Dissemination

The other second-grade teachers have requested copies of the writer's project, as have three members of the School Board. Therefore, the writer will provide duplicates of the report for all who have requested it.

Some parents of the second-grade students who asked for ideas to use at home will be provided with copies of the calendar activities. In order to insure schoolwide access to the report, the writer will furnish the school library with a copy of the complete report. Finally, in order to provide closure to the writer's original request to implement the practicum activities, the writer will send a copy of the practicum to the Superintendent of Schools.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

APPENDIX A

Second-Grade Teachers:

As a doctoral candidate in Curriculum Development and Systemic Change at Nova Southeastern University, I have been assigned to implement my second practicum as part of the requirements for graduation for Doctor of Education. Could you please take the time to fill out the following survey and return it to me by the end of the week? I greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Professionally,

Dena Davis

Please Circle

1. Do you feel that your students have more difficulty writing and speaking on themes than on multiple-choice tests measuring the theme?

   Never Sometimes Frequently

   Comments:

2. Would you utilize a program designed to increase fluency in theme writing and speaking?

   Never Sometimes Frequently

   Comments:

APPENDIX B

PARENT LETTER

APPENDIX B

PARENT LETTER

Dear Parents,

As a doctoral candidate in Curriculum Development and Systemic Change at Nova Southeastern University, I have been assigned to implement a practicum as part of the requirements for graduation. The problem I will be attempting to resolve relates to literature-based thematic writing.

During the eight month implementation, I will be acting as a problem-solver, not a researcher, and as such will be attempting to improve the students' skills utilizing both hard data and comparisons to projected outcomes. At all times I will be accountable to my principal, my practicum advisor, the Director of Practicums, and the School Board, all of whom have acknowledged permission for me to do this practicum. I am, of course, available to you, the parents of my students, at anytime to answer any questions you may have. Having implemented a successful practicum last year, I am very excited about this new project.

Although students' names are never used, nor will they be able to be identified in any way, I need to request your permission in order to involve your child in the practicum implementation. Please indicate your preference below.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Dena Davis

____ Yes, my child may participate in the practicum implementation.

____ No, I prefer that my child not participate in the practicum implementation.

APPENDIX C

CHECKLIST
FOR
PRE AND POST IMPLEMENTATION

APPENDIX C

CHECKLIST

FOR

PRE AND POST IMPLEMENTATION

1. On the average how many times per week do you provide students the opportunity to write on topics of their own choosing?

   0 1 2 3 4 5 >5

2. On the average how much time do you devote during a typical week to a theme or focus-area decided upon by the class?

   <20 min. 30 min. 40 min. 60 min. 80 min. 100 min. >100 min.

3. On an average how many times per week do you provide the opportunity for children to share their writing orally with others?

   0 1 2 3 4 5 >5

4. Comments:

APPENDIX D

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

APPENDIX D

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

1. On the average how many times per week do you provide students the opportunity to write on topics of their own choosing?

   0 1 2 3 4 5 > 5

2. On the average how much time do you devote during a typical week to a theme or focus-area decided upon by the class?

   < 20 min. 20 min. 40 min. 60 min. 80 min.
   100 min. > 100 min.

3. On an average how many times per week do you provide the opportunity for children to share their writing orally with others?

   0 1 2 3 4 5 > 5

4. Comments: